

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A suturing device comprising:
 - a housing having a proximal end ~~[[and]]~~, a distal end, an opening disposed toward the distal end, and a blade guard partially extending over the opening;
 - a needle actuation handle disposed at the proximal end of the housing;
 - a movable handle;
 - a shaft at least partially disposed within a portion of the housing and extending distally from the distal end of the housing;
 - a needle movable within a needle lumen associated with the shaft and that extends toward a proximal end of the housing, the needle being attached to a length of suture, the needle having a tapered tip, the tapered tip being initially oriented toward the distal end of the housing; and
 - a stationary suture cutting blade positioned on the housing within the opening and beneath the blade guard, the stationary suture cutting blade having a cutting edge configured to sever the suture drawn across the stationary suture cutting blade ~~movable handle such that when the needle is withdrawn from the device, the suture can be drawn across the blade to sever the suture.~~
2. (Canceled).
3. (Currently Amended) The suturing device of claim 1, wherein ~~the housing further includes a proximal end, and the moveable handle and the blade are positioned near the distal end of the housing.~~

4. (Canceled).
5. (Original) The suturing device of claim 3, wherein the needle and the suture are withdrawn from the proximal end of the housing.
6. (Currently Amended) The suturing device of claim 1, wherein ~~the housing further includes a proximal end,~~ and the moveable handle and the blade are positioned near the proximal end of the housing.
7. (Canceled).
8. (Canceled).
9. (Canceled).
10. (Previously Presented) The suturing device of claim 1, wherein the movable handle is configured to deploy a foot.
11. (Original) The suturing device of claim 1, wherein the needle has a distal end and the suture is attached to the distal end of the needle.

12. (Currently Amended) A suturing device comprising:

a housing having a proximal end ~~[[and]]~~, a distal end, and a hollow body having an ~~proximal opening disposed toward the distal end, and a blade guard partially extending over the opening an inner surface;~~

~~an elongate stationary suture cutting blade positioned on the housing within the opening and beneath the blade guard, the stationary suture cutting blade having a cutting edge inner surface of the proximal opening of the housing;~~

an elongate shaft at least partially disposed within the housing and extending distally from the distal end of the housing, the elongate shaft having a distal end region;

a removable needle actuation handle disposed at the proximal end of the housing and removably from within the proximal opening of the housing;

a needle extending from the needle actuation handle, through the housing and further through a needle lumen associated with the shaft that extends toward the proximal end of the housing, the needle having a tapered tip, the tapered tip being initially oriented toward the distal end of the housing; and

a suture carried by the device, wherein a portion of the suture is positioned near the distal end region of the shaft such that the needle pulls the suture proximally to position the suture through tissue, the needle actuation handle being removable from within the proximal opening of the housing to position the suture adjacent the suture cutting blade to separate the needle from the suture.

13. (Currently Amended) The suturing device of claim 12, wherein the blade is positioned near the distal end of the inner surface of the ~~proximal opening~~ of the housing.

14. (Original) The suturing device of claim 13, wherein the needle pulls the suture through the proximal end of the housing.

15. (Canceled).

16. (Original) The suturing device of claim 12, wherein the needle and the suture are withdrawn from the proximal end of the housing.

17. (Currently Amended) The suturing device of claim 12, wherein the blade is positioned near the proximal end of the inner surface of the ~~proximal~~ opening of the housing.

18. (Previously Presented) The suturing device of claim 20, wherein the blade is mounted on an end of the finger grip.

19. (Canceled).

20. (Currently Amended) A suturing device comprising:

a housing having a proximal end ~~[[and]], a distal end, an opening disposed toward the distal end, and a blade guard partially extending over the opening, [[and]]~~ the housing includes a finger grip;

a needle actuation handle disposed at the proximal end of the housing;

a shaft at least partially disposed within a portion of the housing and extending distally from the distal end of the housing;

a needle movable within a needle lumen associated with the shaft and that extends toward a proximal end of the housing, the needle being attached to a length of suture, the needle having a tapered tip, the tapered tip being initially oriented toward the distal end of the housing; and

a stationary suture cutting blade mounted positioned on the ~~finger grip of the housing within the opening and beneath the blade guard, the stationary suture cutting blade having a V-shaped cutting edge configured to sever the suture drawn across the stationary suture cutting blade that is positioned such that when the needle is withdrawn from the device, the suture can be drawn across the blade to sever the suture.~~

21. (Currently Amended) The suturing device of claim 20, wherein ~~the housing further includes a proximal end, and the finger grip and the blade are positioned near the proximal end of the housing.~~

22. (Previously Presented) The suturing device of claim 21, wherein the needle and the suture are withdrawn from the proximal end of the housing.

23. (Previously Presented) The suturing device of claim 20, wherein the needle has a distal end and the suture is attached to the distal end of the needle.